

AMERICAN SHIPPING.

COMMISSIONER RATE'S NEW WORK.
AMERICAN MARINE: THE SHIPPING QUESTION IN HISTORY AND POLITICS. By William W. Bates, Esq., pp. 450. Boston and New-York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

This is a very valuable and comprehensive work, written by one who has spent fifty years in the study of ships and navigation. In early life the author was the editor of the *oily magazine* in the United States devoted to the interests of shipbuilding, engineering, navigation and commerce; subsequently he was manager of the Island Lloyds Register and United States Commissioner of Navigation; and by business experience, official service and prolonged study of the shipping question, he is pre-eminently qualified for writing an exhaustive volume on the American marine. He has produced not merely the best, but practically the only work on this subject. It is a branch of literature which has been so completely neglected that only a few pamphlets, Congressional reports and fugitive essays bearing upon the shipping question can be found in the public libraries. If debates in Congress and much of the writing for the press on the American commercial marine have been ill-digested, it has been because there was no standard work of informing quality dealing with the historical, commercial, economic and political phases of the subject. Since the publication of Dr. Wharton's digest of American diplomacy there has been a marked development of intelligence in the discussion of international questions in Congress and by the press. The publication of this masterly exposition of the causes of the decline of American shipping in the foreign trade can hardly fail to exert a similar educational influence.

The four opening chapters relate to the National Interest in a marine, the economy by shipping under the flag, the utility of maritime pursuits and the progress of naval arts.

The fifth chapter involves a comparison of American and British navigation laws and introduces the controversial portions of the work.

It reveals the duality of the American system by which the coasting and river and lake marine is protected and the fleet in foreign service exposed to competition under free trade conditions. It also contrasts the original and the existing British systems and demonstrates that the marine has been systematically protected by subsidy, subvention, insurance discrimination and other mercantile policies since the passage of the reciprocity and free ship laws of 1849.

The author contends that the competency of the modern system of British ship-protection has depended greatly on the inaction and failure of the American Congress to counteract it.

"Our want of interest in the great arena whence England has drawn her wealth and power has been a godsend to all her people, but a misfortune to our own."

The evolution of British maritime power is explained with lucidity and comprehensive knowledge in the following chapter, great stress being laid upon Lloyd's inspection policy and the underwriting system by which the shipping of all other countries is discriminated against and underrated.

The next three chapters are devoted to the early shipping policy of the United States, under which the property of the commercial marine was promoted by genuine protective measures; to the subsequent decline of shipping interests under the free-trade regime of 1815 and 1850, and to the effects of the Civil War and of the continuance of maritime reciprocity or free trade on the high seas.

These chapters are accompanied by luminous statistical exhibits which involve a complete exposure of the present condition of the marine and its future.

We have here a pleasant story of "two ways of love," and of English country life in the earlier years of the present century. In charming contrast to the quiet tone of the main narrative are some brief episodes of war and battle which impart a peculiar interest to the work as a whole.

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